

## Public Comments

Submitted Before 3pm on January 21st, 2025

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Dear Town Council and Members of the AHSEC:

I have attended or watched the recordings of the 4 AHSEC meetings and continue to be concerned about the disconnect between the objective of the Sunrise Provision (to replace the 50 VLI units at Ford) with the work of the Committee.

Ford is listed in the Housing Element at 50 units of Very Low Income (VLI), as indicated in the Adequate Sites table on page 121 of the HE, with zoning at 20 units/acre. Therefore, as confirmed by the Planning Department, ***in order to be accepted by HCD, any replacement would also need to accommodate 50 VLI units on parcels zoned at 20 units/acre.***

As reported by the AHSEC, the Sunrise Provision Outreach Committee “identified” 26 sites. Of these, 7 were already in the HE (i.e. Ladera Church, Glen Oaks, Christ Church, etc.), 11 are “private properties in stalled discussions or with no interest,” and others were previously considered during the AHSEC but dismissed for various reasons (Blue Oaks strip due to fire risk/slope, Town soccer field due to public input, sub-station due to limited development opportunity and constrained location, etc.).

If I have followed the process accurately, of the 26 on the list, there are currently 3 new parcels identified, however none appear viable relative to the objective of the Sunrise Provision (replacing 50 VLI at 20 units/acre zoning) and/or have other additional significant challenges:

- 1) 3350 Alpine Road - this would not replace Ford but has the potential to lower density at Ford
- 2) Fogarty - constrained site for wildfire risk, complexity of Williamson Act
- 3) Hawthorns Historical Complex - seems highly unlikely this would be of interest to MidPen given their mission, working with MidPen is an extremely long process (not possible within Sunrise timeline), and development at the Historic Complex would be extremely expensive

The Sunrise Provision Outreach Committee was created on 9/27/23 and the final report was published on 9/11/24. The new Ad Hoc Site Evaluation Committee has met for the past 4 months. Altogether the post-AHSEC process has spanned 16 months (longer than the AHSEC) and has yet to identify a viable alternative to Ford. As mentioned in my initial comment to the AHSEC (attached below), ***I too would 100% prefer an alternative location to Ford and will be the first to join what will be a chorus of gratitude from the community if an alternative is identified***, but given my experience with HCD's requirements and our robust and expensive efforts over the last 3+ years, it remains an enormous challenge.

The Site Inventory has remained effectively unchanged since December 2022, despite the Town investing hundreds of thousands of dollars in consultant fees and countless hours of staff time over the past two years; a process which has been a root cause of the Town's financial challenges and ongoing staffing shortage. While a few smaller incremental opportunities have been identified, the substantial expenditure of time and money has yielded no meaningful progress or results for the objective of the Sunrise Provision.

I encourage the Council to require a cost-effective and efficient approach toward realistic outcomes by the AHSEC, and have two suggestions/requests to this end:

- 1) Given the Town's limited resources and other important priorities in the Planning Department, and as a taxpayer, I ask that the Council limit and monitor staff time spent by the AHSEC and report on all costs for transparency to the public.
- 2) I suggest the Council re-focus the AHSEC on their objective of identifying a site or sites that will accommodate 50 Very Low Income units - with zoning at 20 units/acre.

Attached for reference is my initial comment to the AHSEC after their first meeting in November.

Thank you,  
Sarah Wernikoff

11/22/23 Email to Karen Askey and the AHSEC

Hi Karen:

Thanks again for volunteering to Chair the new Ad Hoc Site Evaluation Committee. Here are some initial quick thoughts for the Committee to consider based on my observations of the first meeting:

- a) Ford is on the HE for 50 Very Low Income (VLI) units, with 20 units/acre zoning (page 129 in the HE). In order for HCD to accept an alternative location the landowner will need to be willing to re-zone at 20 units/acre. *Terrence, please correct me if I'm misunderstanding.*
- b) Attached is the most recent data on requirements for the VLI category from SMC, including rental rates.
- c) Regarding financing, the CEO of Alta Housing confirmed with me last month that 40 units at a single location is likely the lowest number of units a nonprofit developer would go to ensure economies of scale. This is based on the competitive process of how organizations like Alta or MidPen get funded by the State. I'm happy to share more about what I learned if there is interest from anyone on the Committee.
- d) Attached is a presentation on affordable housing financing from an event I attended last year. I think Craig Adelman from [LeSar Development Consultants](#) could be a good resource. I shared this with the Council Post-Adoption subcommittee last year; I'm not sure if they pursued it, but you may want to check. At the time, Mr. Adelman shared that in his experience, he had not seen these funding models achieved in smaller developments.
- e) Some of the questions from the Committee suggested a lack of familiarity with 180 hours of meetings during the AHSEC and beyond including the post-approval meetings between Jan-May 2023 (process with HCD, past discussions on Town-owned property, zoning requirements, etc.). Given the cost of that process which significantly contributed to our budget issues, I want to ensure the information is leveraged, vs. spending precious staff time on re-educating Committee members. I'm happy to help provide background on all prior work to any interested Committee member.
- f) While I understand the preference for anonymity from property owners, at this point after many months of review, as a taxpayer, I'm concerned about the lack of transparency in the process proposed in your first meeting, especially if the Committee is planning to use Town resources/staff. (I'm also a little surprised given several on the Committee have been strong public advocates for, or critics of perceived lack of, transparency over the last several years). Regarding staff, we must not lose sight that we also need Planning staff focused on items where we are already sorely behind in the HE (including several ADU programs, [see page 33-41 from the 4/10/23 Council meeting packet](#), and [recording including my questions that start around timestamp 48:00](#)) as will be evident at the next annual review in April 2025.
- g) Our Housing Element is the only HE in SMC to be decertified, evidence that our Town is already under scrutiny by HCD, and we are currently pursuing recertification.
- h) Our HE has drawn both local and national media attention (most recent example last week in the SF Standard).

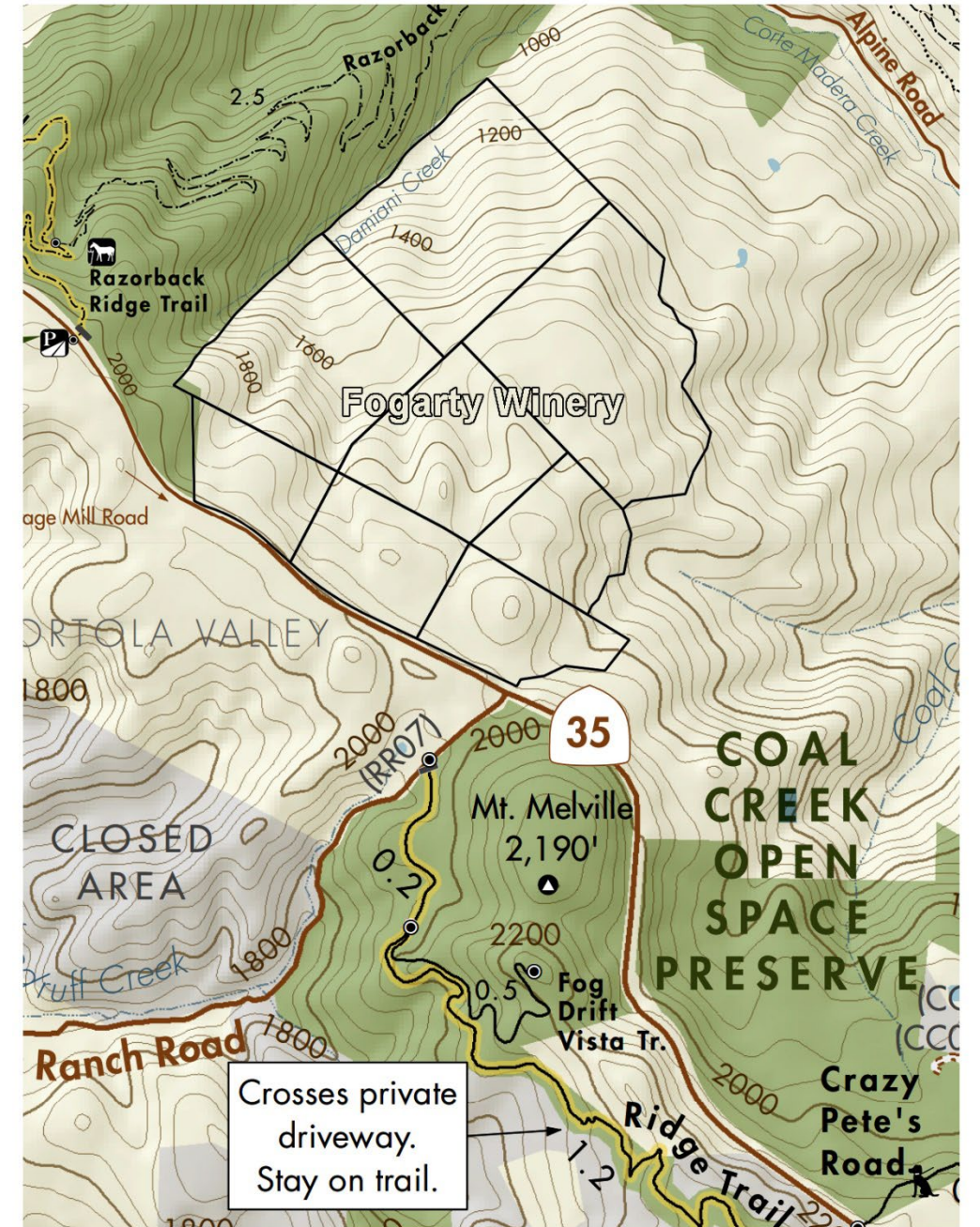
To be clear, I too would 100% prefer an alternative location to Ford and will be the first to join what will be a chorus of gratitude from the community if an alternative is identified, but given my experience with HCD's requirements and our robust and expensive efforts over the last 3+ years, I encourage a cost-effective, transparent and efficient approach toward realistic outcomes in the pursuit of an alternative by the new Ad Hoc Committee.

Thank you,  
Sarah

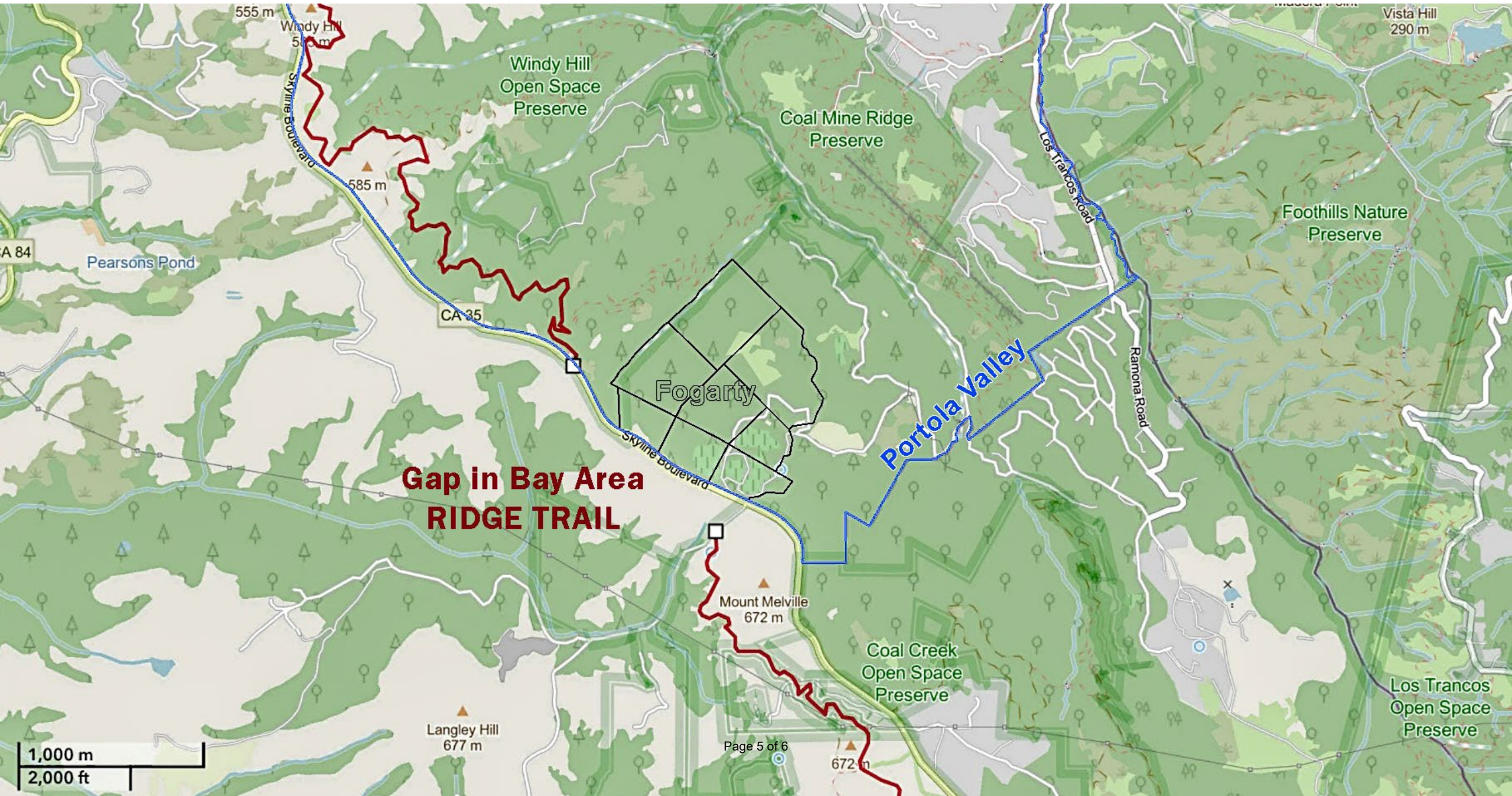
Fogarty Winery parcels (with acreage)



Fogarty outlined on MROSD map with Windy Hill, Coal Creek, Russian Ridge



Fogarty parcels are centered in one of the gaps in the Bay Area Ridge Trail



Fogarty Winery APN 080010020 in 1941 and 2016 with ~3 acre partially open area adjoining Skyline

